



Social Research Laboratory, PO Box 15301, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 (928) 523-1515

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For More Information:
Fred Solop, Political Scientist
Kristi Hagen, Acting Director
(928) 523-1515

Sheila Morago, Executive Director
Arizona Indian Gaming Association
(480) 452-7648

PRESIDENTIAL RACE TIGHTENS IN ARIZONA FOLLOWING SECOND DEBATE

The gap between George W. Bush and John Kerry has narrowed in Arizona following the second presidential debate. Bush now leads Kerry by five percent among likely voters (49% to 44%), according to a telephone survey conducted for the Arizona Indian Gaming Association by the Social Research Laboratory (SRL) of Northern Arizona University. Earlier SRL polling found Bush with a double-digit lead in the state. As Arizonans await Wednesday's final presidential debate at Arizona State University in Tempe, these poll results indicate that Arizona has returned to "battleground state" status in the presidential election.

The survey was conducted between October 8 and 11, with 401 likely Arizona voters. Results are accurate within a margin of error of +/- 5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level.

RETURN TO BATTLEGROUNDS STATUS

George W. Bush leads John Kerry 49 percent to 44 percent among likely voters in Arizona. One percent of likely voters say they will vote for Michael Badnarik, the Libertarian candidate, and five percent of likely voters remain undecided. Social Research Laboratory polling indicates that the race narrowed significantly in the state following the second

presidential debate. Polling in March by the Social Research Laboratory showed George W. Bush with an eleven-point lead in the state.

Bush and Kerry are holding on to support from within their respective parties, and are battling for support among independent voters in Arizona. While 83 percent of Republicans say they will vote for George W. Bush and 75 percent of Democrats say they will vote for Kerry, Independent voters are divided with 45 percent supporting Bush and 46 percent supporting Kerry.

The vote is similarly divided along ideological lines. Eighty-eight percent of conservatives support Bush and 86 percent of liberals support Kerry. Among people in the ideological center, 52 percent support Kerry and 39 percent support Bush. Seven percent of people in the center remain undecided.

There is a large income gap in the Arizona vote. A majority of people earning less than \$50,000 support Kerry (51%) and a majority of people earning more than \$50,000 support Bush (56%).

Support for the candidates is steady across men and women voters. Half of men and women (50%, respectively) support George Bush. Forty-three percent of women and 45 percent of men support Kerry. A small age gap exists among Kerry supporters. Bush is supported by 49 percent of likely voters age 45 and younger, and 51 percent of voters older than 45. Kerry, however, has 47 percent support among younger voters, and only 41 percent support among older voters.

Sheila Morago, Executive Director of the Arizona Indian Gaming Association, said, "This is an important election for American Indians living in Arizona and for the entire state. The president of the United States sets the tone for many policies that directly affect Arizonans. The 22 federally recognized Indian tribes in Arizona are immediately impacted by these policies."

ARIZONA VOTE INFLUENCED BY PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Arizona voters are paying close attention to the presidential debates. Ninety-two percent of likely voters in the state say they have watched or heard some portion of the first two debates. Most debate watchers (59%) believe John Kerry has been doing better in the debates.

Among people who think Kerry is doing better in the debates, 81 percent say they will vote for Kerry and 14 percent will vote for Bush. Among those who think Bush has been doing better in the debates, 94 percent say they will vote for Bush.

Fred Solop, survey director and political scientist at Northern Arizona University, commented on the results: “Arizona was defined as a ‘battleground state’ for Bush and Kerry early in the race. This changed when polling showed Bush with a double-digit lead in the state. The debates have reversed this trend. As Arizona voters tune in and see Kerry doing well in the debates, the gap between Bush and Kerry has narrowed. Arizona has returned to battleground state status. The third presidential debate could play a very important role in deciding which candidate will win Arizona.”

The third presidential debate will be held at Arizona State University in Tempe. Ninety percent of likely voters in Arizona plan on watching or listening to the third and final presidential debate.



Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University

October 12, 2004

BACKGROUND MEMO

The survey was conducted between October 8 and 11, 2004. A random sample of 401 likely Arizona voters was asked questions about their vote preferences and about the presidential debates. Survey question results are subject to a sampling error of +/- 5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level. For comparative purposes, a smaller sample of likely voters (169) were asked questions about their vote preferences on October 8, immediately before and during the second presidential debate. Results from this pre-debate sample are subject to a margin of error of +/- 7.7 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below. This study was sponsored by Arizona Indian Gaming Association which regularly surveys the state on important and salient issues.

Have you watched on TV or heard on the radio any of the recent debates between George W. Bush and John Kerry?

	Yes	No
Total	92%	8%

[if yes] Who do you think has been doing better in the debates, Bush or Kerry? [names rotated]

	George W. Bush	John Kerry
Total	41%	59%

Do you plan on watching or listening to the last Presidential debate that will take place this coming Wednesday in Tempe, Arizona?

	Yes	No
Total	90%	10%

If the Presidential election was held today, would you vote for John Kerry, the Democratic candidate, George W. Bush, the Republican candidate, or Michael Badnarik, the Libertarian candidate? [candidate names rotated]

	George W. Bush	John Kerry	Michael Badnarik	Another Candidate	Don't Know
Total	49%	44%	1%	1%	5%
Pre-2 nd Debate*	55%	40%	1%	---	4%
March 2004 (registered voters)	48%	37%		6%	8%
Bush better in debates	94%	2%	---	1%	2%
Kerry better in debates	14%	81%	1%	1%	4%
Republican	83%	15%	---	1%	2%
Democrat	16%	75%	2%	1%	5%
Independent	45%	46%	1%	2%	6%
Liberal	10%	86%	1%	1%	1%
In-between	39%	52%	1%	2%	7%
Conservative	88%	8%	1%	---	3%
Female	50%	43%	---	1%	6%
Male	50%	45%	2%	1%	3%
Income < \$50 K	42%	51%	1%	1%	6%
Income > \$50 K	56%	39%	1%	2%	3%
Age <= 45	49%	47%	---	1%	4%
Age > 45	51%	41%	2%	1%	5%

*(n=169, margin of error +/- 7.7% for this question)